

## Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee – Urban Design & Massing Subcommittee  
December 21, 2020, 12 pm

**Subcommittee members present:** Tom Nally, Wendy Friedman, Carlos Ridreujo, Joe Gaudino

**Staff:** Kara Brewton, Eddie Bates

**Other meeting attendees included:** John Van Scoyoc, Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, Fred Perry.

**Meeting materials:** Agenda

The meeting began at 12:00PM Via Zoom.

Kara began the meeting by discussing the costs of removing the two power substations located in the Boylston Street Corridor. The cost to put these materials below ground would be \$1 Million each. The example is based on the costs to do this at the substation located next to the Audi site.

Tom Nally then provided the subcommittee with a presentation on six sites within the corridor which are currently underutilized and also have potential for development. The six sites which he analyzed were:

1. The site directly next to the Madris Building site
2. The auto school site directly across the street from the site listed before
3. The Mobil Station site and 345 Boylston Street to 116A Cypress Street
4. The Audi site
5. The Valvoline/Dunkin site
6. The UHaul site

He first briefly discussed each site. Site 1 includes three buildings with very substantial parking behind the buildings on Brington Road. Tom noted that there appears to be an easement in front of the main driveway to the parking lot. Tom suspects that the easement is due to a culvert of underground streams which may be located there. The site has some restrictions which include that within 50 feet of any residential property, the height limit is 45 feet. One other feature of this site is that it goes uphill.

Site 2 consists of two buildings. In addition to the slope going east on Boylston Street, the site also features an additional slope which moves downward south on the site. The site is small and very restricted. There may not be many options for redevelopment here.

Site 3 includes the Madris Building, the new addition to the high school, and the Mobil Service Station. Residential buildings surrounding the Mobil site have a higher density than nearby neighborhoods. Tom discussed that newer design guidelines for this site could match the larger sidewalk next door to the Mobil site and also preserve and add trees here.

Tom continued discussion on Site 4 which is the recently renovated Audi site and Site 5 which features a Dunkin Donuts. Tom mentioned that Site 5 is on the edge of the Cameron Street neighborhood and features a prominent slope downward. The current design guidelines state that entrances on

commercial sites should not be on residential streets off of Boylston Street. The site also features a number of trees. Tom also talked about Site 6 which is the UHaul site and is mostly an open area normally filled with UHaul trucks. The current building is set back from the street and could be a site with widened sidewalks and more trees. Tom also noted that on west side of the site, there are large granite rocks on the border with the Old Lincoln School.

Tom stated the topography for each of these sites is important and needs to be analyzed more closely before finalizing design guidelines.

Carlos then presented a conceptual analysis of the west side of Boylston Street. Carlos explained that due to the topography and shadows, the buildings on the south side of the street can be larger than buildings on the north side. He also stated that one possible way to increase the size of the sidewalks is to move newer development further back from the street. Carlos utilized the building on Boylston Place as a good example of setbacks. He also stated that the idea would be that buildings have a larger façade along Boylston and soften as they move back toward less dense neighborhoods. For example, along the Cameron Street neighborhood, the back sides of some buildings could contain some new open space.

Carlos then explained the idea of having a signature bridge cross Boylston Street and connect Walnut Path to the Davis Path Footbridge and make this one single pathway.

Carlos also discussed that newer buildings on Boylston Street should have commercial on the first floor as residential units may not want to be on street level.

Kara also mentioned exploring the wall at the Old Lincoln School along Boylston Street and identifying ways of bringing that wall down to open up the space more. Kara stated she would get the current plans from the Building Department of these walls.

Wendy and Joe then presented and asked how the general guidelines are currently enforced as it appears they aren't always followed with developments.

Wendy stated that the neighborhood needs more pedestrian friendliness utilizing a complete streets approach. Since current setback requirements are rarely followed, Wendy and Joe are recommending that the Town provide guidelines for sidewalk width, tree plantings, and additional pedestrian crossing lights.

Wendy continued discussion with a focus on parking and stated that a possible recommendation could be that the Town consider subsidies to help encourage developers to move parking underground and possibly combining underground parking with neighboring buildings.

Wendy then talked about building height and stated that the heights around the Mobil Station are now higher due to the height of current high school addition. On the Mobil site, constructing a building to that height could cause a tunnel effect, but also, a new building there could now be higher than initially envisioned.

The subcommittee continued discussion on all three presentations.

Kara then stated that the next steps would be to put the ideas from the presentations into SketchUp. She asked that members send her their presentations.

Carlos then mentioned that this committee should also look at 10 Brookline Place since the developer has plans for future redevelopment of the site.

Fred Perry, a member of the public, spoke and stated that the committee should focus on the future of the Old Lincoln School.

Jennifer Dopazo-Gilbert, also a member of the public, and speaking on behalf of 10 Brookline Place, said that Bulfinch would share information with Kara and Eddie on a proposed project there and would like to get feedback from the subcommittee sometime in the future.

**The meeting ended at 1:28PM.**

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